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- USPC 604/385.01, 385.09; 119/169
See application file for complete search history.

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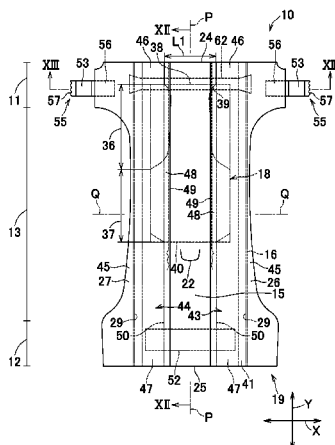
- International Search Report mailed Jul. 8, 2014 in International
Application No. PCT/JP2014/065951 filed Jun. 16, 2014.

- Primary Examiner — Michele M Kidwell
(74) Attorney, Agent, or Firm — Hauptman Ham, LLP

- (57) **ABSTRACT**

An absorbent article having a longitudinal direction and a transverse direction orthogonal to the longitudinal direction includes an absorbent panel having a ventral region, a dorsal region and an intermediate region between the ventral and dorsal regions in the longitudinal direction. The absorbent panel includes a liquid-permeable topsheet, a liquid-impermeable backsheet and a liquid absorbent core lying between the liquid-permeable topsheet and the liquid-impermeable backsheet. The absorbent core is arranged in a limited area extending from a zone of the intermediate region defined adjacent to a slit for formation of an opening into which the pet animal's tail is inserted into the ventral region and has a first end lying in the ventral region and a second end lying in the intermediate region. A dimension of the ventral region in the transverse direction gradually narrows from the side of the second end toward the first end.

7 Claims, 14 Drawing Sheets



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FIG. 1

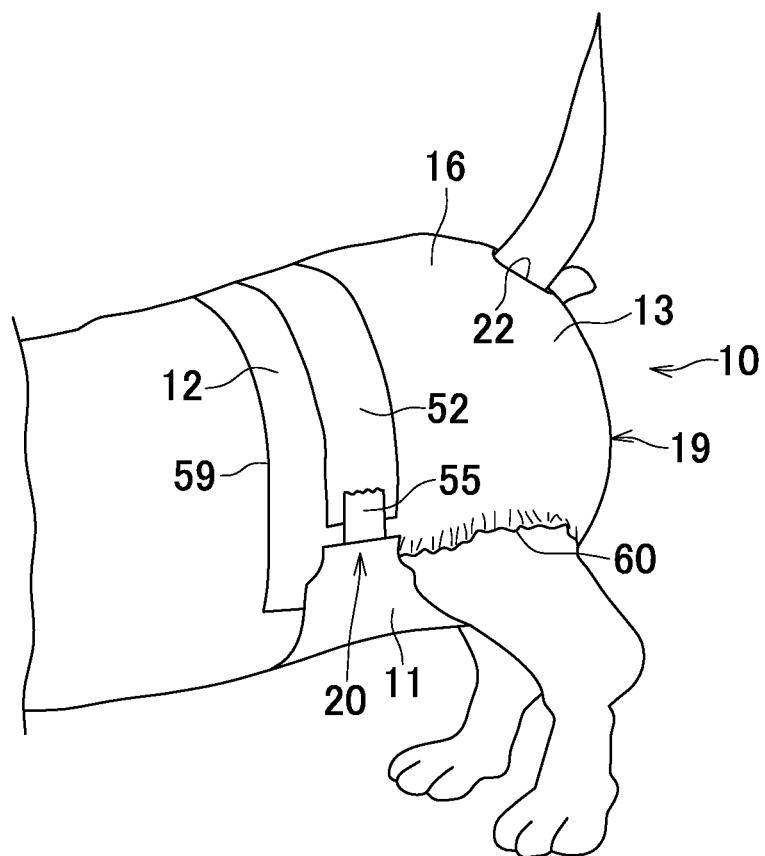


FIG. 3

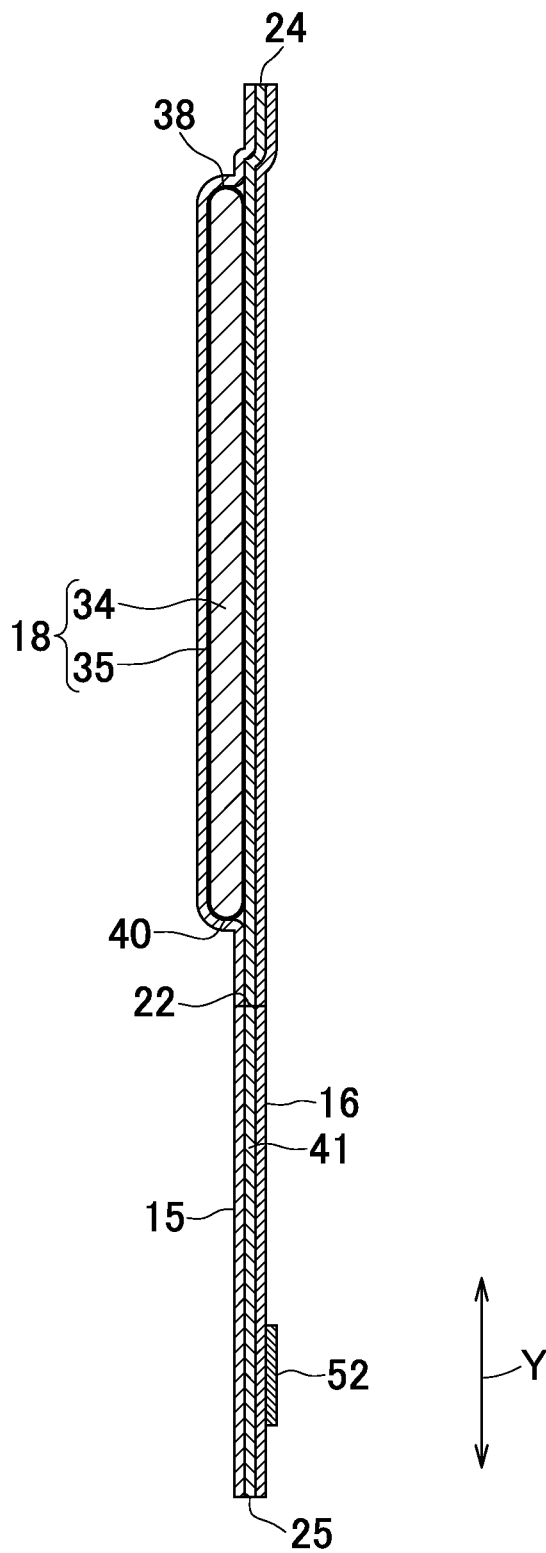


FIG. 4

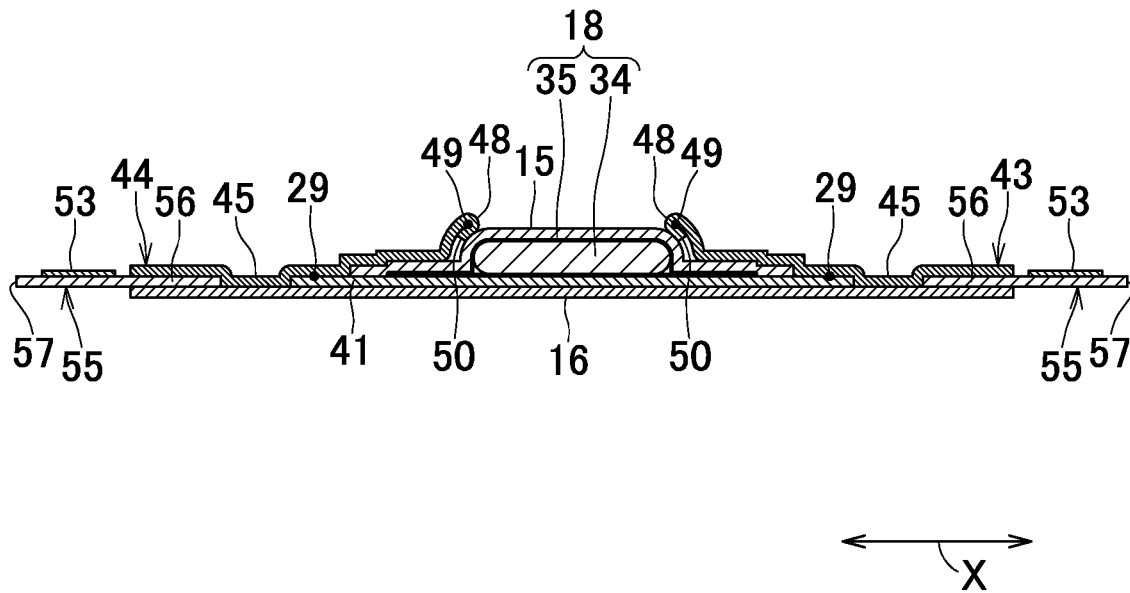


FIG. 5

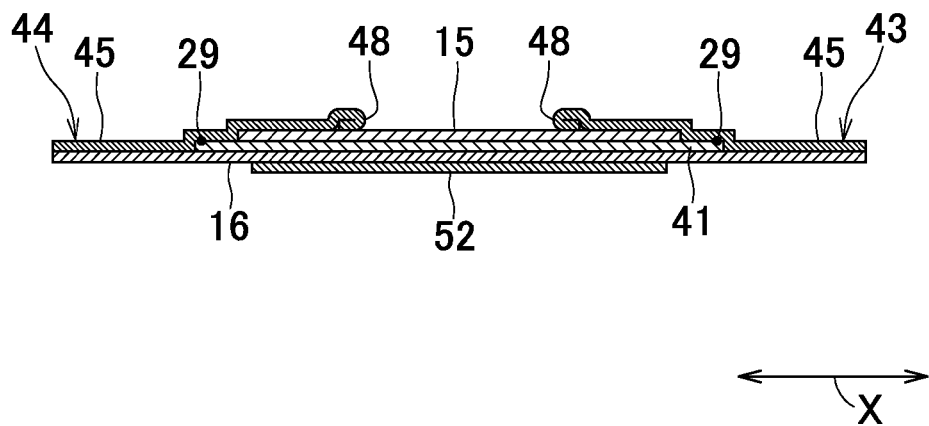


FIG.6

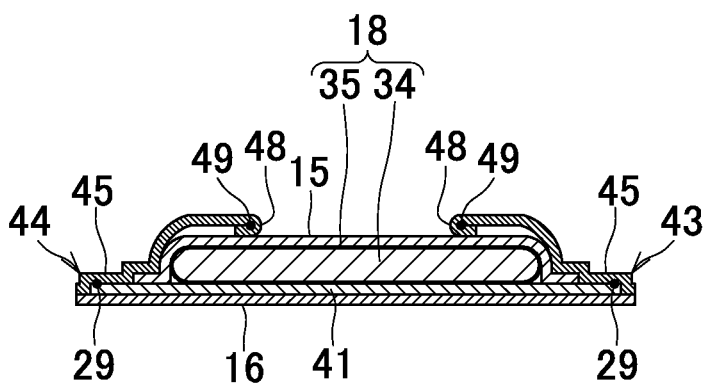


FIG.7

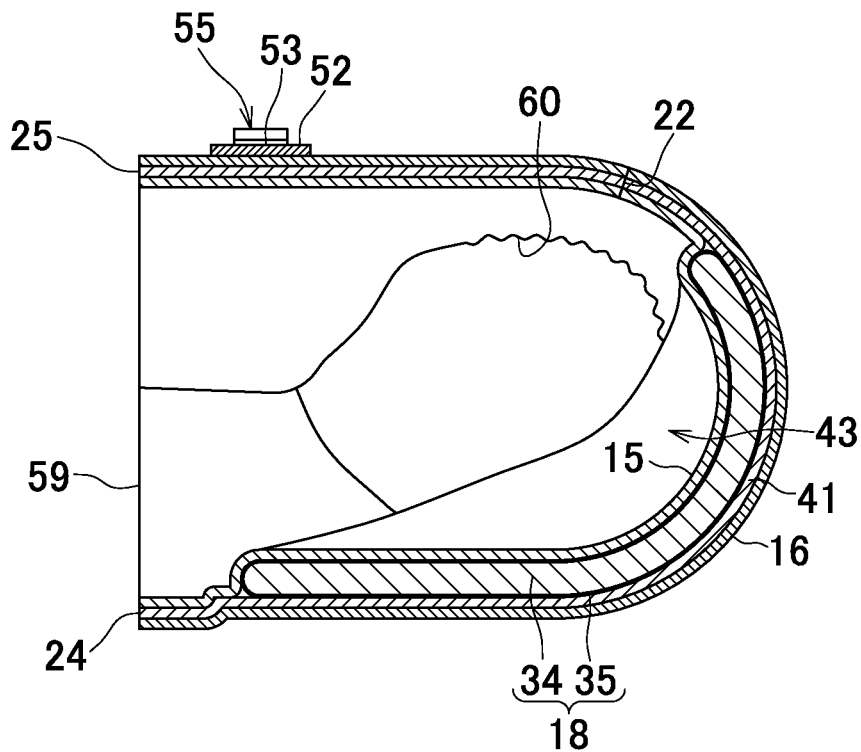


FIG. 8

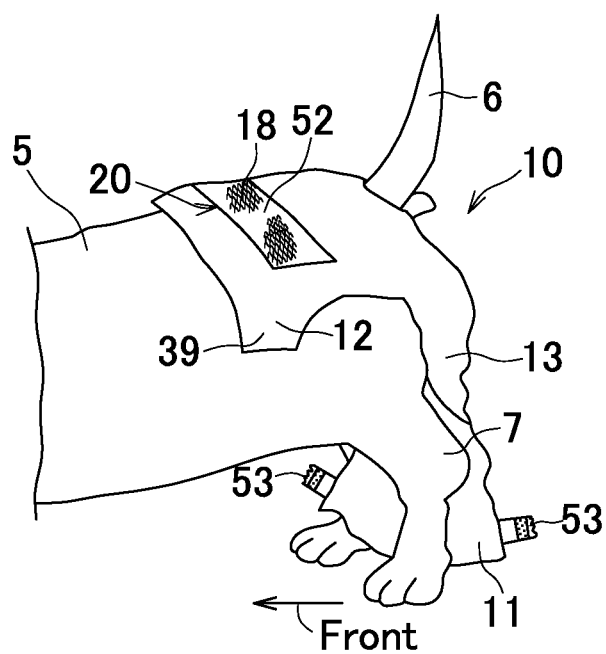


FIG. 9

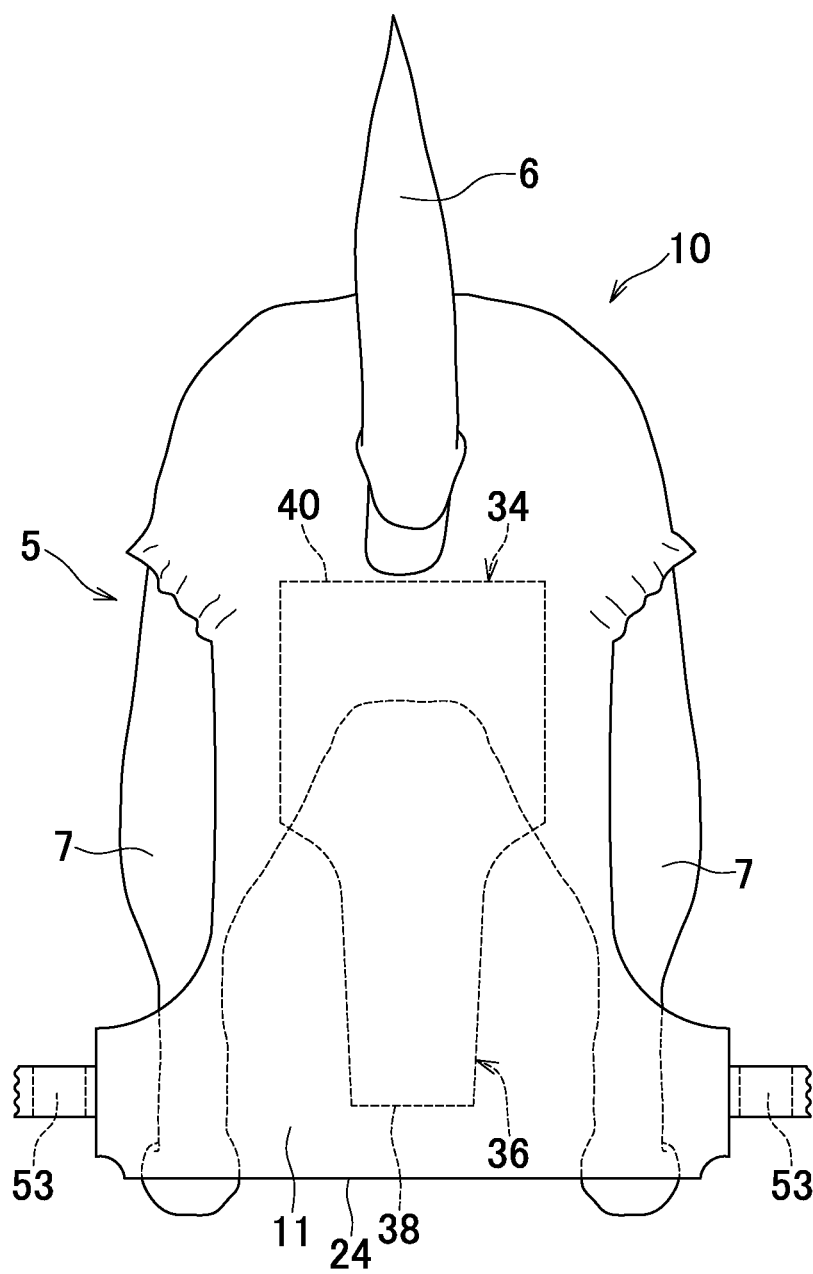


FIG. 10

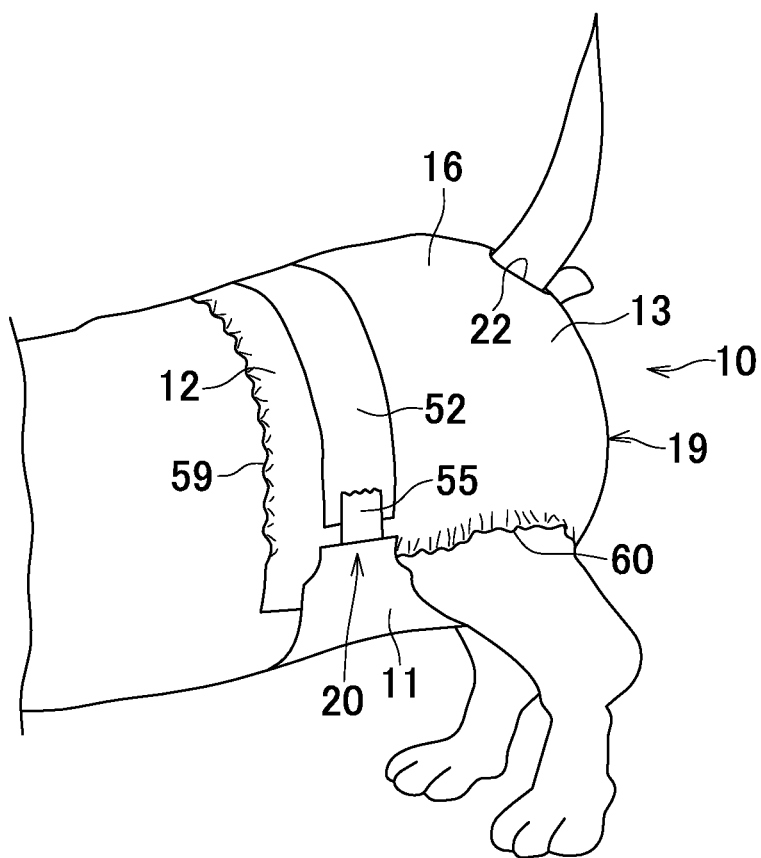


FIG. 11

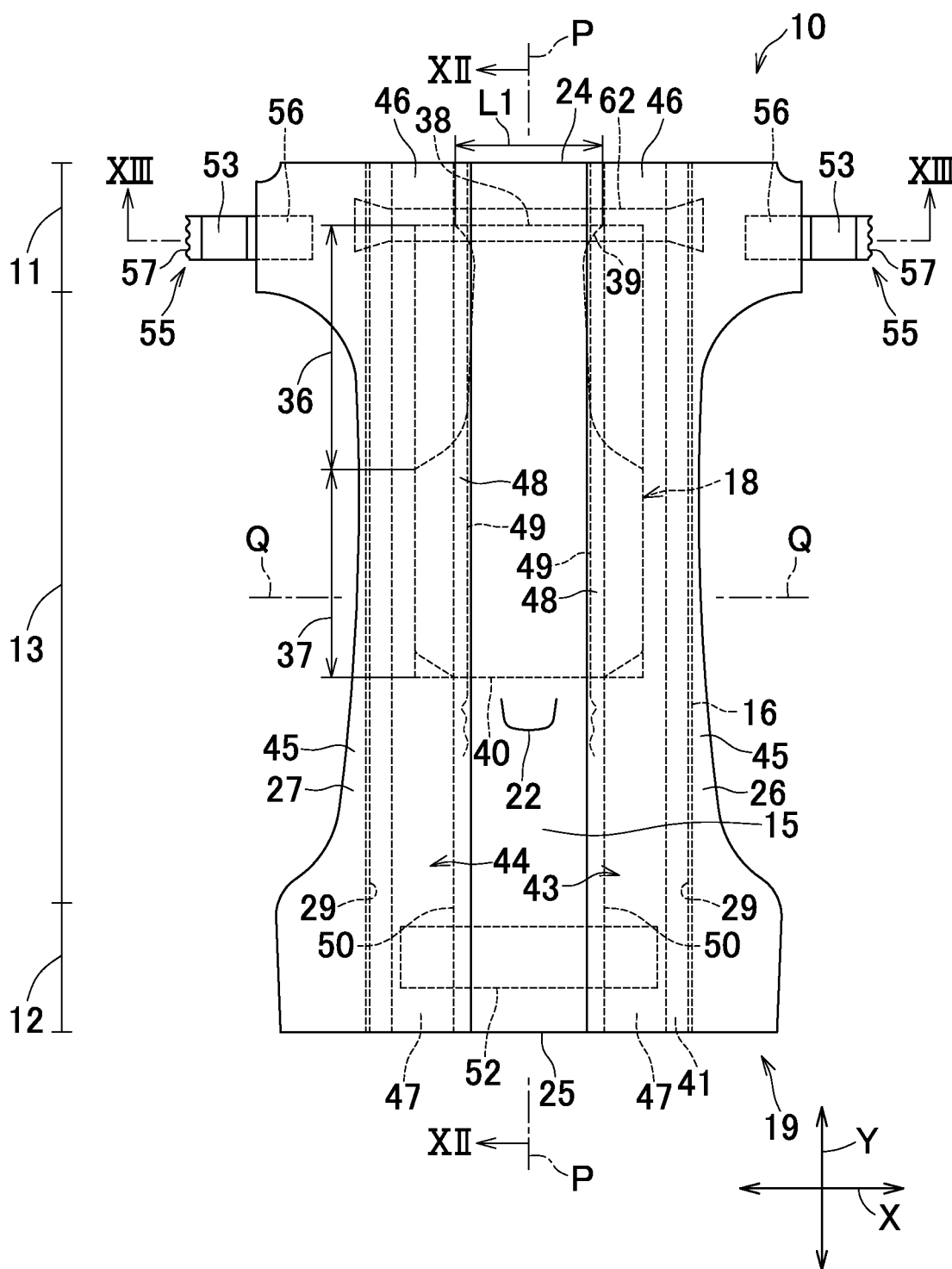


FIG. 12

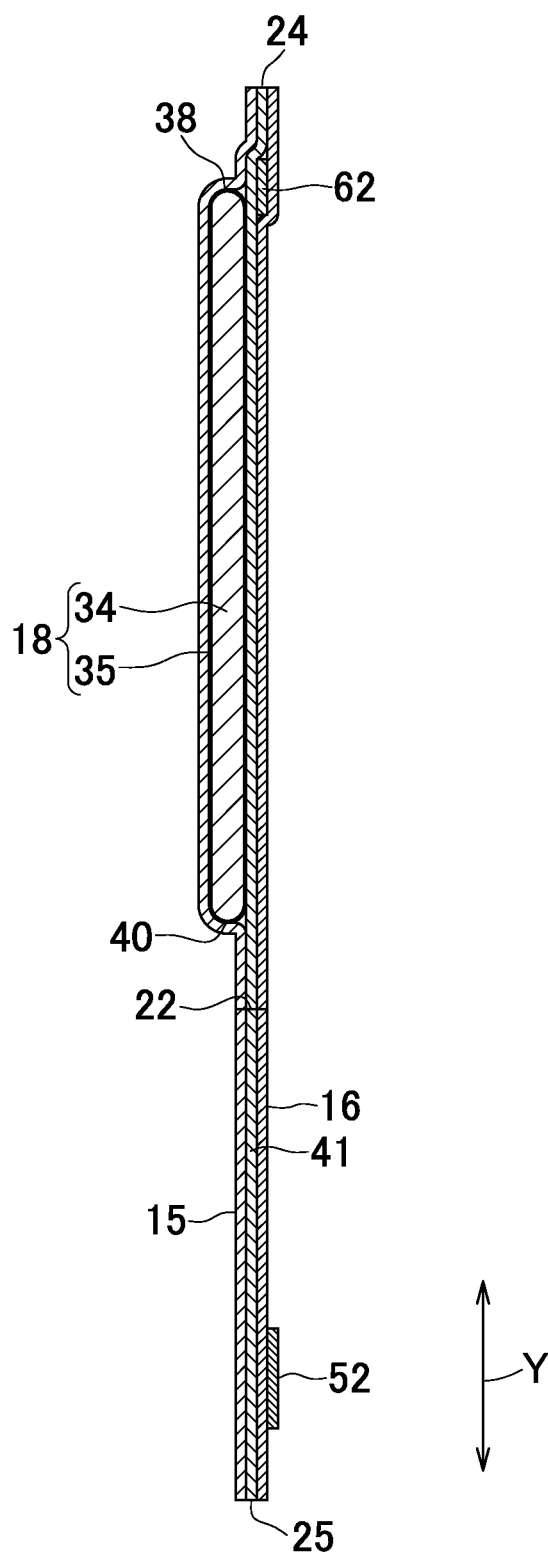


FIG. 13

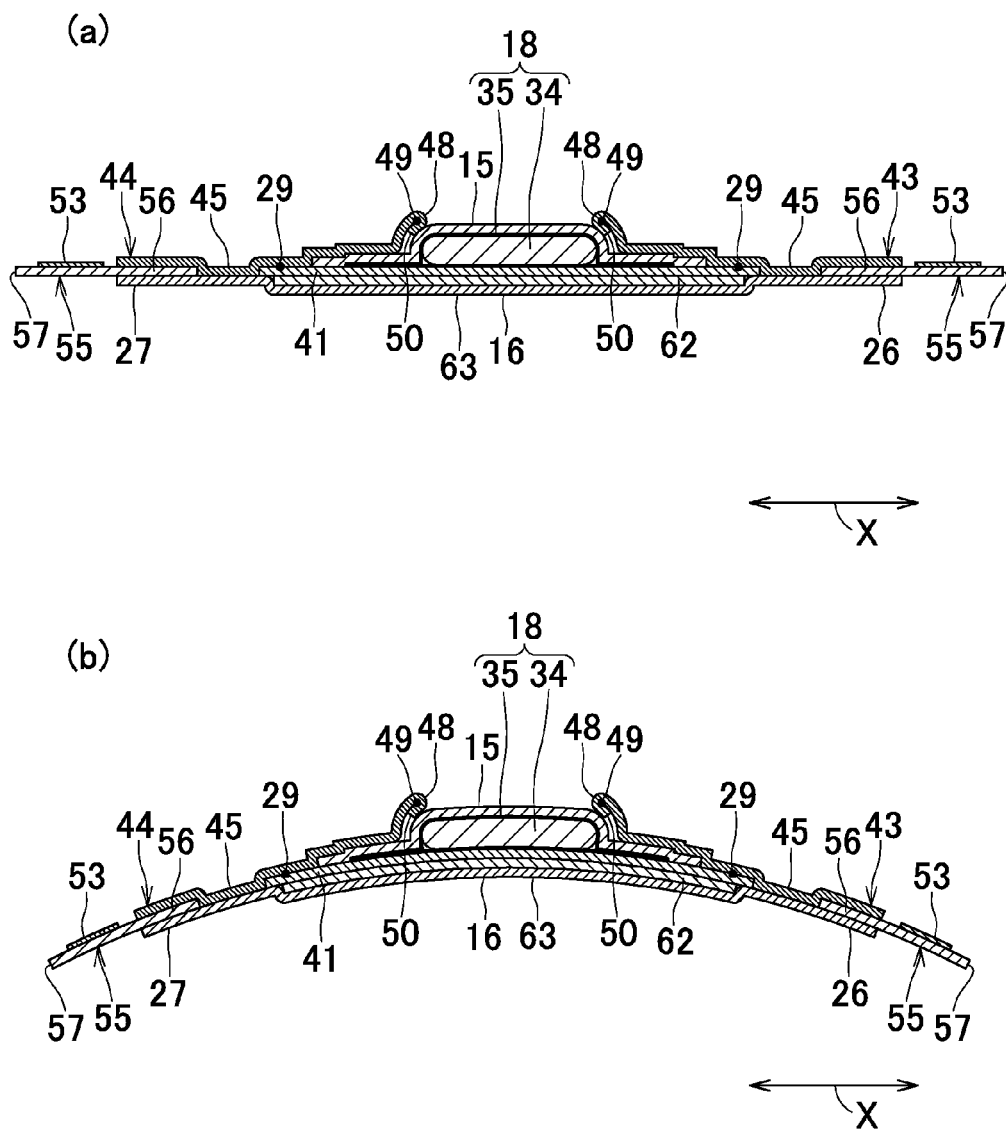


FIG. 14

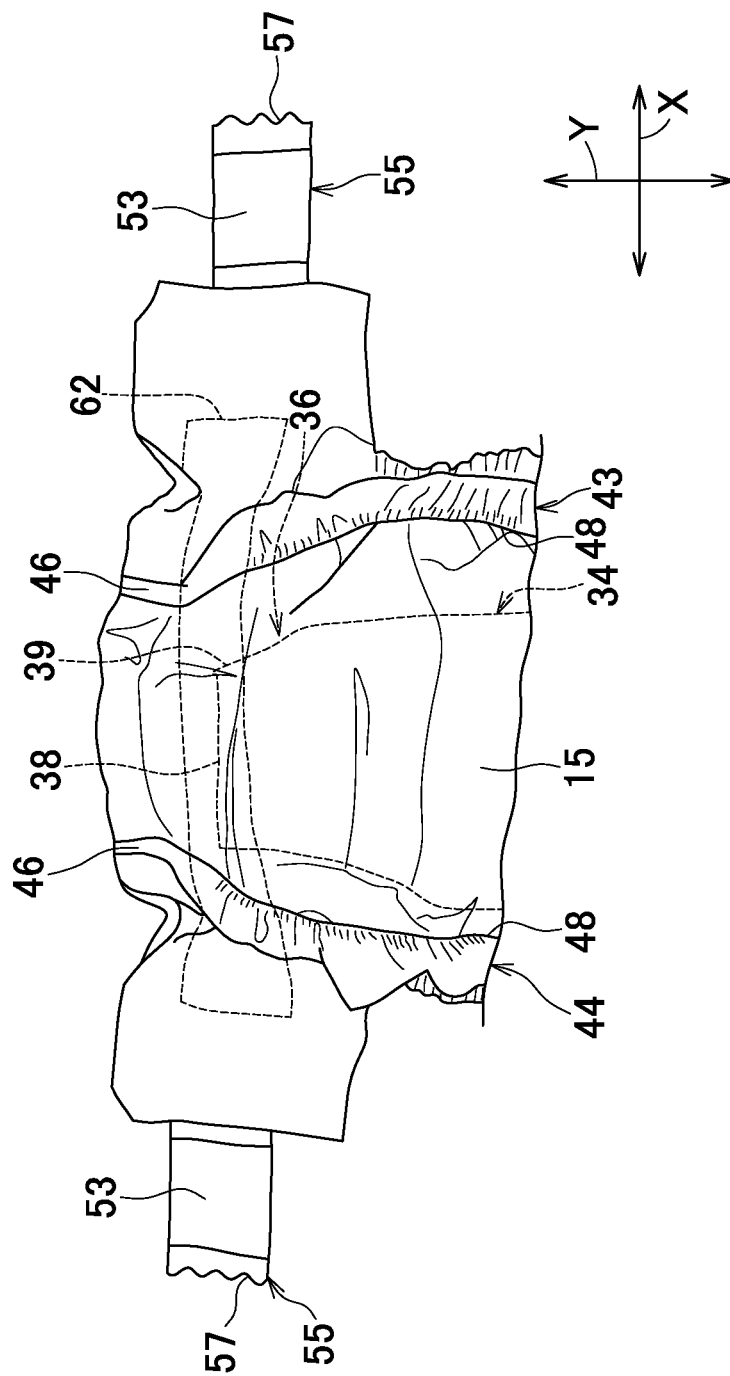


FIG. 15

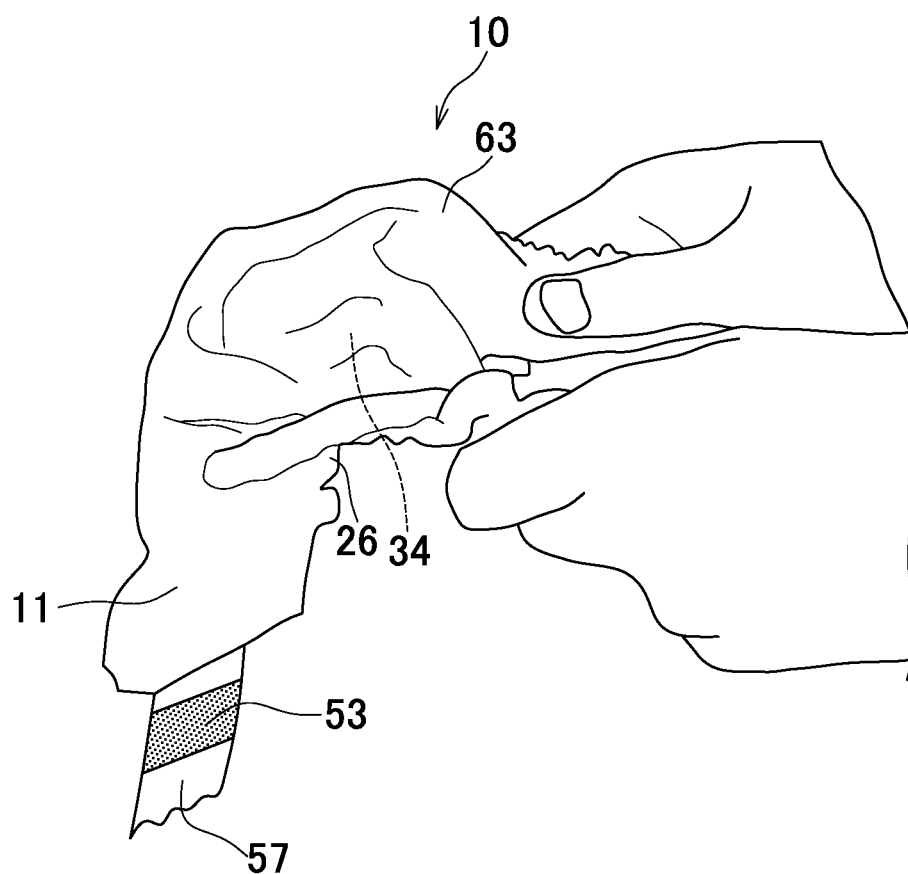
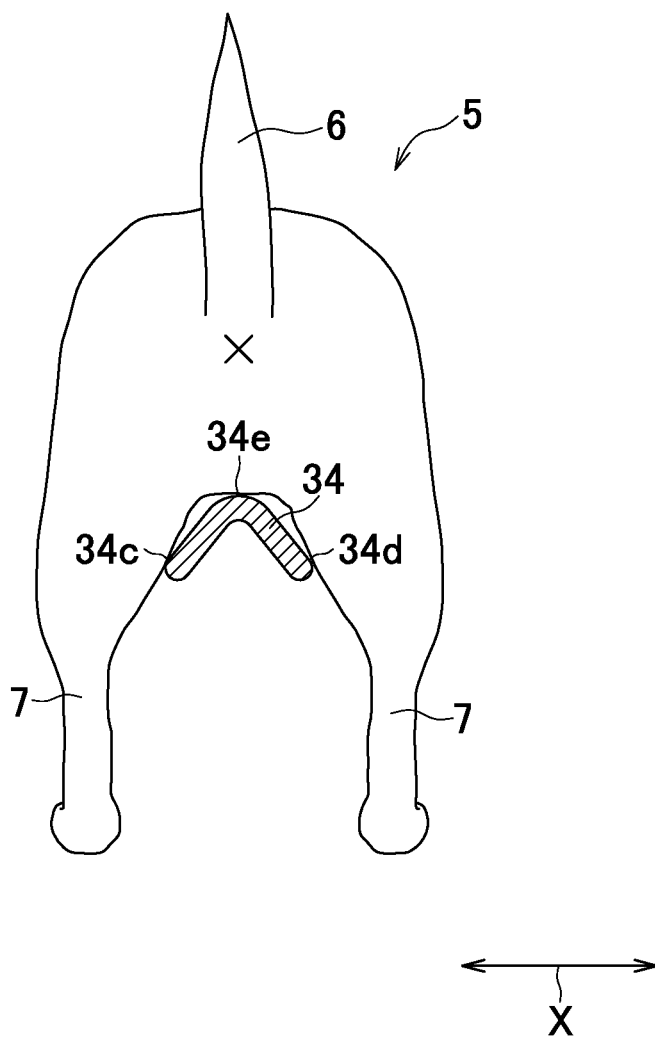


FIG. 16



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ABSORBENT ARTICLE FOR PET ANIMALS**RELATED APPLICATIONS**

The present application is a National Phase of International Application Number PCT/JP2014/065951, filed Jun. 16, 2014, which claims priority to Japanese Application No. 2014-118172, filed Jun. 6, 2014.

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to absorbent articles of pet animals, for example, dogs.

BACKGROUND

Conventionally, absorbent articles for pet animals are known having a longitudinal direction, a transverse direction being orthogonal thereto, a body-contact surface facing the pet animal's body and a non-body-contact surface lying on the opposite side thereof, and including a ventral region, a dorsal region, an intermediate region defined between the ventral region and the dorsal region, a liquid-permeable interior sheet, a liquid-impermeable exterior sheet and a liquid absorbent core lying between the interior sheet and the exterior sheet.

For example, Patent Literature 1 discloses an absorbent article having a topsheet as the interior sheet, a backsheet as the exterior sheet and a liquid absorbent core lying between the interior and the exterior sheets. In this absorbent article, the liquid absorbent core has a generally rectangular shape and has a first end lying in the ventral region and a second end lying in the intermediate region wherein the width of the liquid absorbent core is uniform all thereover.

CITATION LIST**Patent Literature**

{PTL 1}: JP 2004-159591 A

SUMMARY**Technical Problem**

In the absorbent article disclosed in PTL 1, the width of the absorbent core is uniform all thereover. In consequence, the liquid absorbent core is apt to be indirectly caught by both rear legs of the pet animal when it is tried to pass the first end of the liquid absorbent core between both rear legs of the pet animal to put the absorbent article on the pet animal's body. For this reason, this known absorbent article has a problem such that a handling to put the article on the pet animal's body is difficult or, at least, it is not easy to pass the liquid absorbent core between the pet's both rear legs.

An object of the present invention is to provide an absorbent article for pet animal improved so as to restrict the possibility that the liquid absorbent core might be indirectly caught by the rear legs when it is tried to pass the portion between both the rear legs of the pet animal, thereby facilitating the article to be put on the pet animal's body.

Solution to Problem

The present invention relates to an absorbent article for pet animal having a longitudinal direction, a transverse direction being orthogonal thereto, a body-contact surface

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facing pet animal's body and a non-body-contact surface lying on the side opposite thereto and including an absorbent panel having a ventral region, a dorsal region and an intermediate region defined between the ventral region and the dorsal region as viewed in the longitudinal direction wherein the absorbent panel includes a liquid-permeable interior sheet, a liquid-impermeable exterior sheet and a liquid absorbent core lying between these interior and exterior sheets.

The liquid absorbent core in the present invention is arranged in a limited area extending from a zone of the intermediate region defined adjacent to a slit for formation of an opening into which the pet animal's tail is inserted into the ventral region and has a first end lying in the ventral region and a second end lying in the intermediate region opposed to each other in the longitudinal direction; and a dimension in the transverse direction of the ventral region of the liquid absorbent core gradually narrows from the side of the second end toward the first end.

Advantageous Effects of Invention

In one or more embodiments of the absorbent article for pet animal according to the present invention, a dimension in the transverse direction of the ventral region of the liquid absorbent core gradually decreases from the second end side toward the first end side and consequentially it is possible to restrict a possibility that the liquid absorbent core might be indirectly caught by the rear legs of the pet animal in the course of guiding the liquid absorbent core between the both rear legs of the pet animal so that the absorbent article may be easily put on the body of the pet animal.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

The drawings illustrate specific embodiments of the present invention including optional and preferred embodiments as well as essential features of the invention.

FIG. 1 is a perspective view illustrating a diaper according to a first embodiment as an example of an absorbent article for pet animals according to the present invention put on a dog's body.

FIG. 2 is a plan view of the diaper.

FIG. 3 is a schematic sectional view taken along line III-III in FIG. 2.

FIG. 4 is a schematic sectional view taken along line IV-IV in FIG. 2.

FIG. 5 is a schematic sectional view taken along line V-V in FIG. 2.

FIG. 6 is a schematic sectional view taken along line VI-VI in FIG. 2.

FIG. 7 is a schematic sectional view of the diaper having a ventral region and a dorsal region fastened with each other by means of first and second fastening elements.

FIG. 8 is a perspective view illustrating a process of putting the diaper on the body of the pet animal.

FIG. 9 is a perspective view illustrating, from behind, a process of putting the diaper on the body of the pet animal.

FIG. 10 is a view similar to FIG. 1, illustrating the diaper according to a second embodiment.

FIG. 11 is a view similar to FIG. 2, illustrating the diaper according to the second embodiment.

FIG. 12 is a view similar to FIG. 3, illustrating the diaper according to the second embodiment.

FIG. 13 (a) is a view similar to FIG. 4, illustrating the diaper according to the second embodiment and FIG. 13 (b) is a sectional view illustrating a state in which a central

region in a transverse direction of the ventral region protrudes toward the side of a body-contact surface with respect to both side edges under contraction of ventral side elastic members.

FIG. 14 is a plan view of a first end portion of an absorbent panel under contractile force of respective elastic members.

FIG. 15 is a perspective view illustrating a state in which the first end portion is gripped with a hand in the course of putting the diaper on the pet animal's body.

FIG. 16 is an explanatory diagram illustrating a relationship between the pet animal and the first end portion with the diaper put on the pet animal's body.

DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS

The embodiments described below relate to an absorbent article for pet animals as illustrated in FIGS. 1-16, including both optional and preferred features as well as those features which are essential features of the present invention.

First Embodiment

FIGS. 1 through 9 illustrate a first embodiment of a diaper 1 according to the present invention. In this regard, FIGS. 2 through 6 illustrate a state in which elastic members 29, 49 described hereunder in more details are stretched (i.e., a state under tension). The diaper 10 has a longitudinal direction Y, a transverse direction X being orthogonal thereto, a pet animal's body-contact surface and a non-body-contact surface opposite thereto, a longitudinal center line P bisecting a dimension in the transverse direction X and extending in the longitudinal direction Y and a transverse center line Q bisecting a dimension in the longitudinal direction X and extending in the transverse direction X. The diaper 10 includes, a ventral region 11, a dorsal region 12, an intermediate region 13 lying between the ventral region 11 and the dorsal region 12, a topsheet (interior sheet) 15, a backsheet (exterior sheet) 16, an absorbent panel 19 having an absorbent structure 18 having an absorbent core 34 disposed between the topsheet 15 and the backsheet 16 so as to extend at least in the intermediate region 13 and fasteners 20 to fasten the ventral region 11 and the dorsal region 12 to each other. With the diaper 10 put on the pet animal such as dog, the ventral region 11 faces the belly of the pet animal, the dorsal region 12 faces the back of the pet animal and the intermediate region 13 faces the buttocks of the pet animal.

Referring to FIG. 2, the absorbent panel 19 includes the topsheet 15, the backsheet 16 and the absorbent body 18 interleaved between the topsheet 15 and the backsheet 16. Referring to FIGS. 2 through 6, the absorbent panel 19 includes a first end 24 and a second end 25 opposed to each other in the longitudinal direction Y and both extending in the transverse direction X and both lateral portions 26, 27 opposed to each other in the transverse direction X and extending in the longitudinal direction Y.

The topsheet 15 may be formed of fibrous nonwoven fabric, a porous plastic film or a laminate thereof. For example, the topsheet may be formed of an air-through fibrous nonwoven fabric, a spunbond fibrous nonwoven fabric or a pointbond fibrous nonwoven fabric. These nonwoven fabrics have for example, a mass of about 10 g/m² to 40 g/m².

The backsheet 16 lies on the exterior surface of the absorbent panel 19 and may be formed of material such as a moisture-permeable plastic film, a fibrous nonwoven fabric or a laminate sheet thereof. For example, the backsheet

16 may be formed of a spunbond fibrous nonwoven fabric having a mass per unit area in a range of 8 to 30 g/m².

The topsheet 15 and the backsheet 16 extend outward beyond a peripheral edge of the absorbent body 18 and are joined to each other in the respective regions of these two sheets 15, 16 extending outward in this manner with, for example, hot melt adhesive (not shown) distributed on at least one of the opposed surface of these two sheets 15, 16. A leakage-barrier sheet 41 may be interposed between these two sheets 15, 16 and the absorbent body 18 may be secured on the leakage-barrier sheet 41. In the intermediate region 13 of the absorbent panel 19, the sheets 15, 16 and the leakage-barrier sheet 41 are disposed with a slit 22 for formation of an opening through which the pet animal's tail may be exposed outward. Referring to FIGS. 4 through 6, for example, a dimension in the transverse direction X of the topsheet 15 may be smaller than a dimension in the transverse direction X of the leakage-barrier sheet 41.

Unlike well-known disposable diapers for the human being, in the ventral region 11 and the dorsal region 12 of the diaper 10, none of elastic members extending in the transverse direction X is arranged. In this way, it is possible to restrict a situation occurring particularly in the dorsal region 12 such that the sheets 15, 16 might contract in the transverse direction X if such elastic members extending in the transverse direction X are arranged in this region 12 and whereby it is possible to restrict contraction in the transverse direction X of a first fastening element 52 formed from a group of loops of a mechanical fastener as described later. Consequently, it is assured that the first fastening element 52 and a pair of second fastening elements 53 are easily fastened to each other.

The absorbent structure 18 includes the absorbent core 34 formed, for example, from a mixture of wood fluff pulp and absorbent polymer particles and a liquid-diffusive sheet 35, for example, tissue paper to wrap the absorbent core 34. The absorbent structure 18 is arranged in a limited area extending in the longitudinal direction Y from the intermediate region 13 to the ventral region 11, more specifically, extending from a zone of the intermediate region 13 defined adjacent to the slit 22 into the ventral region 11.

The absorbent core 34 has a first end 38 in the ventral region 11 and a second end 40 in the intermediate region 13 and these ends 38, 40 are opposed to each other in the longitudinal direction Y wherein the absorbent core 34 is divided into a narrow region 36 having the first end 38 and a wide region 37 having the second end 40. In the wide region 37, a dimension in the transverse direction X of the absorbent core 34 is uniform. In the absorbent core 34, a dimension L1 in the transverse direction X measured along the first end 38 is smaller than a dimension L2 in the transverse direction X measured along the second end 40 and, in the narrow region 36, the width thereof gradually shrinks from the side of the second end 40 toward the first end 38. In a state free from any effect of the contractile strength of elastic members 29, 49 (described later), a dimension L3 in the longitudinal direction Y of the narrow region 36 of the absorbent core 34 is preferably in a range of about 30 to about 90% of a dimension L4 in the longitudinal direction Y of the absorbent core 34. The dimension L1 in the transverse direction X of the core 34 measured along the first end 38 may be, for example, in a range of about 50 to about 80 mm. The dimension L1 in the transverse direction X of the core 34 measured along the first end 38 is in a range of about 30 to 70% of the dimension L2 in the transverse direction X measured along the second end 40. The term "the first end 38" used herein means the most

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distal portion on one side of the absorbent core **34**. The term "the side of the second end **40**" used herein means the most distal portion on the other side of the absorbent core **34** including the vicinity thereof.

Referring to FIGS. **3** through **6**, the leakage-barrier sheet **41** form of a liquid-impermeable but moisture-permeable plastic film is arranged between the topsheet **15** and the backsheet **16**. The leakage-barrier sheet **41** is secured by the intermediary of, for example, hot melt adhesive (not shown) distributed to one of the opposed surfaces of the sheets **15**, **16**.

Referring to FIGS. **2** through **6**, the absorbent panel **19** further includes a pair of containment sheets **43**, **44** extending in the longitudinal direction **Y** on the body-contact surface of the topsheet **15**. The containment sheets **43**, **44** are arranged symmetrically about the longitudinal center line **P**. The containment sheets **43**, **44** partially define the both lateral portions **26**, **27** and include proximal portions **45** secured to the body-contact surface of the topsheet **15**, front and rear end portions **46**, **47** defined by respective pair of end portions opposed in the longitudinal direction **Y** and secured to the body-contact surface of the topsheet, and distal portions **48** extending in the longitudinal direction **Y** and formed by inner side edge portions **50** of the respective containment sheets **43**, **44** folded back inward.

Lateral elastic members **29** extending in the longitudinal direction **Y** are attached between the containment sheets **43**, **44** and the backsheet **16**, more specifically, between the containment sheets **43**, **44** and the leakage-barrier sheet **41**. As the lateral elastic members **29**, strand- or string-like elastic members having a fineness in a range of about 200 to 1000 dtex may be used. The lateral elastic members **29** are contractibly attached under tension in the longitudinal direction **Y** in the ventral region **11**, the intermediate region **13** and the dorsal region **12**.

The respective distal portions **48** of the containment sheets **43**, **44** are disposed with strand- or string-like containment elastic members **49** contractibly attached under tension in the longitudinal direction **Y**. Referring to FIG. **2**, respective zones of the containment sheets **43**, **44** in which the absorbent structure **18** is present as viewed in the transverse direction **X** are disposed with the containment elastic members **49** attached thereto under tension. In contrast, respective zones of the intermediate region **13** defined in the vicinity of the dorsal region **12**, in which the absorbent structure **18** is not present as viewed in the transverse direction **X**, are disposed with the containment elastic members **49** attached in a relaxed state to the containment sheets **43**, **44** in a relaxed state to the containment sheets **43**, **44**, in other words, without a possibility that the containment sheets **43**, **44** might be affected by any contractile force. Consequently, as illustrated in FIG. **7**, with the first and second fastening elements **52**, **53** fastened to each other and whereby the ventral region **11** joined to the dorsal region **12**, the distal portions **48** are pulled off from the body-contact surface of the topsheet **15** under contraction of the containment elastic members **49** in the respective zones in which the absorbent structure **18** is present as viewed in the longitudinal direction **Y** and whereby the containment sheets **43**, **44** form a pair of barriers functioning to prevent body waste from leaking sideways.

The fastener **20** includes the first fastening element **52** formed of a group of loops for a mechanical fastener extending in the transverse direction **X** (see FIGS. **1** and **2**) and the second fastening element **53** formed of a group of hooks for the mechanical fastener adapted to be fastened to the first fastening element **52**. Respective proximal portions

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56 of a pair of fastening tabs **55** lie between the containment sheets **43**, **44** and the backsheet **16** and these proximal portions **56** are secured, for example, with hot melt adhesive (not shown) distributed to the sheets **43**, **44**. Each of the fastening tabs **55** is preferably formed of sheet material having relatively high stiffness and tensile strength, for example, a plastic film, a fibrous nonwoven fabric, a laminate thereof or a craft paper. The second fastening elements **53** are attached to respective distal portions **57** in a pair of the fastening tabs **55** distanced from each other symmetrically about the longitudinal center line **P**.

Referring to FIG. **8**, in the course of putting the diaper **10** on a pet animal **5**, first, the slit **22** is forced to form an opening into which a tail **6** of the pet animal is inserted and the back of the pet animal **5** is put in contact with the dorsal region **12**. In this state, as illustrated in FIG. **9**, the narrow region **36** of the absorbent core **34** lies between both rear legs of the pet animal **5**. In this step, the ventral region **11** defines the lower end of the diaper **10** and the second fastening elements **53** lie on both outer sides in the transverse direction **X** of the ventral region **11**. In this state, the ventral region **11** in which the absorbent core **34** is present may be pinched with fingers to let the first end **24** of the absorbent panel **19** pass between the both rear legs **7** of the pet animal **5**. For the reason that the dimension in the transverse direction **X** of the absorbent core **34** in the ventral region **11** gradually narrows from the side of the second end **40** toward the first end **38**, it is possible to restrict a possibility that the first end **38** of the absorbent core **34** might be indirectly caught by the both rear legs **7** in this step, thereby facilitating the diaper **10** to be put on the pet animal **5**.

Thereafter, the first fastening element **52** and the second fastening elements **53** may be fastened to each other to define a waist-opening **59** and a pair of rear leg-openings **60** (see FIGS. **1** and **7**). The waist-opening **59** is defined by the first end **24** of the ventral region **11** of the absorbent panel **19** and the second end **25** of the dorsal region **12** and the rear leg-openings **60** are defined by the both lateral portions **26**, **27**. In this regard, while the fastening tabs **55** are exemplarily illustrated to be attached with, for example, hot melt adhesive distributed to the backsheet **16**, it is also possible to arrange the topsheet so as to extend in the transverse direction beyond the periphery of the backsheet and to attach the fastening tabs to these projecting portions of the topsheet with, for example, hot melt adhesive distributed to these projecting portions of the topsheet.

According to this diaper **10**, in addition to the functions and the effects as described hereinabove, the respective proximal portions **45** of the containment sheets **43**, **44** are not in overlapping relationship with the absorbent core **34** and the respective front and rear end portions **46**, **47** of the containment sheets **43**, **44** are also not in overlapping relationship with the absorbent core **34**. Consequently, it is possible to restrict a possibility that the stiffness of the absorbent core might decrease the contractile force of the containment elastic members **49**. Restricting the undesirable influence of stiffness of the absorbent core **34**, it is possible to assure that the containment sheets **43** raise themselves on the absorbent structure **18** under the contractile force of the containment elastic members **49**. In this way, it is possible to prevent body fluids such as urine from leaking beyond the both lateral portions **26**, **27** of the diaper **10** in the transverse direction **X**.

Furthermore, the first end **38** of the absorbent core **34** partially extends outward in the longitudinal direction **Y** beyond the respective ends of the proximal portions **56** on

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the side of the dorsal region 12 so that, when the first end 24 of the absorbent panel 19 is passed between the both rear legs 7 of the pet animal 5, the portion to be passed between the both rear legs 7 includes therein the absorbent core 34 having relatively high stiffness. For this reason, shape retention of the absorbent core 34 is sufficiently assured to facilitate the first end 24 to be passed between the both rear legs 7 of the pet animal 5. Additionally, the absorbent core 34 is continuous in the longitudinal direction Y from the ventral region 11 toward the intermediate region 13 and therefore it is easy to pinch the portion in which the high stiffness absorbent core 34 is present.

Second Embodiment

FIGS. 10 through 16 illustrate the diaper 10 according to a second embodiment. On the side of the first end 24 of the ventral region 11 in this diaper 10, a ventral side elastic member 62 extending in the transverse direction X is attached between the absorbent structure 18 and the backsheet 16, more specifically, between the leakage-barrier sheet 41 and the backsheet 16. The ventral side elastic member 62 is formed of, for example, an elastomer resin such as polyurethane in a belt-like shape.

In a state free from contractile force of the elastic members 29, 49, 62, the narrow region 36 of the absorbent core 34 gradually narrows from the first end 38 of the ventral region 11 toward the transverse central line Q and then gradually widens again as being closer to the transverse central line Q. In the wide region 37 of the absorbent core 34, the dimension thereof in the transverse direction X is constant as long as the core 34 is free from the contractile force of the elastic members 29, 49, 62.

Referring to FIG. 11, the ventral side elastic member 62 has a belt-like shape of a predetermined dimension in the transverse direction X so that the ventral side elastic member 62 may overlap the first end 38 of the absorbent core 34 and a portion 39 of the absorbent core 34 having a dimension in the transverse direction X gradually narrows as the core 34 extends toward the transverse center line Q. Contraction of the ventral side elastic member 62 in the transverse direction X makes it possible to decrease a dimension in the transverse direction X of the first end 38 of the absorbent core 34 so that a dimension in the transverse direction X of the absorbent core 34 in its narrow region 36 may be gradually decreased from the side of the second end 40 toward the first end 38. In this way, it is possible to restrict a possibility that the absorbent core 34 might be indirectly caught by the both rear legs 7, thereby facilitating the diaper 10 to be put on the body of the pet animal 5. Furthermore, in the state of the ventral side elastic member 62 being held under tension, a dimension in the transverse direction X of the absorbent core 34 in the first end 38 may be set to be relatively large. In consequence, the functions and effects as have been described above may be assured without noticeably decreasing the absorbent capacity. In addition, it is possible to make the dimension in the transverse direction X of the absorbent core 34 as the ventral side elastic member 62 contracts in the transverse direction X, thereby enhancing the stiffness of the absorbent core 34 at the first end 38. In this way, the first end 38 of the absorbent core 34 to be passed between the both rear legs 7 of the pet animal 5 has the stiffness further enhanced and, for this reason, it is possible to put the diaper 10 on the body of the pet animal 5 further smoothly.

Contraction in the transverse direction X of the ventral side elastic member 62 decreases a dimension in the transverse direction X of the first end 38 and, in the ventral region

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11, makes a central portion 63 in the transverse direction X including the longitudinal center line P project from the both lateral portions 26, 27 toward the side of the body-contact surface or toward the side of the non-body-contact surface.

For example, as illustrated in FIG. 13 (b), in response to contraction of the ventral side elastic member 62 in the transverse direction X, in the ventral region 11, the central portion 63 in transverse direction X projects from the both lateral portions 26, 27 toward the side of the body-contact surface.

The state of the ventral region 11 in which the central portion 63 in the transverse direction X projects from the both lateral portions 26, 27 toward the side of the body-contact surface and the state of the ventral region 11 in which the central portion 63 in the transverse direction X projects from the both lateral portions 26, 27 toward the side of the non-body-contact surface may be converted each other. For example, in the state of the ventral region 11 in which the central portion 63 in the transverse direction X projects from the both lateral portions 26, 27 toward the side of the body-contact surface, the central portion 63 in the transverse direction X may be pushed with the finger from the side of the body-contact surface toward the side of the non-body-contact surface to convert the state to the state in which the central portion 63 in the transverse direction X projects from the both lateral portions 26, 27 toward the side of the non-body-contact surface.

Referring to FIG. 13 (b) and FIG. 15, in the course of putting the diaper 10 on the body of the pet animal 5, the central portion 63 in the transverse direction X of the ventral region 11 may be projected from the both lateral portions 26, 27 toward the side of the body-contact surface to make the distal portions 57 of the pair of fastening tabs 55 hang down under an action of gravity, thereby setting apart the second fastening elements 53 from the skin of the pet animal 5. Whereby it is facilitated to pinch the second fastening elements 53 and to simplify handling of fastening the first and second fastening elements 52, 53 to each other.

Furthermore, in the course of putting the diaper 10 on the body of the pet animal 5, the central portion 63 in the transverse direction X of the ventral region 11 may be projected from the both lateral portions 26, 27 toward the side of the body-contact surface to put a central portion 34e in the transverse direction X of the absorbent core 34 in contact with the belly of the pet animal 5 and to put both lateral portions 34c, 34d in the transverse direction X of the absorbent core in contact with inguinal regions of the pet animal 5. In this way, the handling of putting the diaper 10 on the body of the pet animal 5 is further smooth.

An arrangement such that the one end of the containment-elastic member 49 in the ventral region 11 overlaps the ventral side elastic member 62 in the planar view makes it possible to project, in the ventral region 11, the central portion 63 in the transverse direction X from the both lateral portions 26, 27 toward the side of the body-contact surface or the side of the non-body-contact surface under mutual influence of contractile force between the two elastic members 49, 62. In the state of the central portion 63 in the transverse direction X projecting from the both lateral portions 26, 27 toward the side of the body-contact surface, it is possible to space the second fastening elements 53 from the skin of the pet animal and it is correspondingly made easy to pinch the second fastening elements 53 with the human fingers.

Furthermore, the arrangement such that, in the ventral region 11, one end of the lateral elastic member 29 overlaps the ventral side elastic member 62 in the planar view makes

it possible to project the central portion **63** in the transverse direction X from the both lateral portions **26, 27** toward the side of the body-contact surface or toward the side of the non-body-contact surface. With the central portion **63** in the transverse direction X projects from the both lateral portions **26, 27** toward the side of the body-contact surface, it is possible to set the second fastening elements **53** apart from the skin of the pet animal and to make it easy to pinch the second fastening elements **53** with the human fingers. In this way, fastening between the first and second fastening elements **52, 53** is simplified.

According to this diaper **10**, in addition to the functions and effects described hereinbefore, it is possible to restrict a decrease in the contractile force of the containment-elastic members **49** since there is no overlapping relationship between the proximal portions **45** of the containment sheet **43** and the absorbent core **34** and there is no overlapping relationship also between the front and rear ends **46, 47** of the containment sheet **43** and the absorbent core **34**.

The ventral side elastic member **62** has been exemplarily described above to have the respective wide regions at the both ends in the transverse direction X and to have the constant width portion between the both ends. However, the present invention is not limited to such an arrangement but the ventral side elastic member may have, for example, a rectangular shape having a constant width in its entirety in the transverse direction X.

The disclosure relating to the present invention as described hereinabove may be arranged as follows:

The absorbent article for pet animals having a longitudinal direction, a transverse direction being orthogonal thereto, the body-contact surface facing pet animal's body and the non-body-contact surface lying on the side opposite thereto and including the absorbent panel having the ventral region, the dorsal region and the intermediate region defined between the ventral region and the dorsal region as viewed in the longitudinal direction wherein the absorbent panel includes the liquid-permeable interior sheet, the liquid-impermeable exterior sheet and the liquid absorbent core lying between these interior and exterior sheets. The liquid absorbent core is arranged in a limited area extending from a zone of the intermediate region defined adjacent to the slit for formation of an opening into which the pet animal's tail is inserted into the ventral region and has the first end lying in the ventral region and the second end lying in the intermediate region opposed to each other in the longitudinal direction; and the dimension in the transverse direction of the ventral region of the liquid absorbent core gradually narrows from the side of the second end toward the first end.

The present invention disclosed above may include at least embodiments as described below. These embodiments may be adopted in isolation or in combination with one another.

- (1) The liquid absorbent core is divided into the narrow region having the first end and a wide region having the second end so that the liquid absorbent core may gradually narrow from the side of the second end toward the first end.
- (2) In the liquid absorbent core, a dimension in the longitudinal direction of the narrow region is in a range of 30 to 90% of a dimension in the longitudinal direction of the liquid absorbent core.
- (3) The absorbent article further includes the ventral side elastic member extending in the transverse direction in the ventral region wherein the ventral side elastic member is contractibly attached under tension between the liquid

absorbent core and the exterior sheet and overlaps the first end of the liquid absorbent core in a planar view.

- (4) The absorbent article further includes the pair of containment sheets extending in the longitudinal direction on the body-contact surface of the interior sheet wherein the pair of containment sheets have proximal portions secured to the interior sheet or the exterior sheet, the distal portions provided with the containment elastic members extending in the longitudinal direction and adapted to be set apart from the interior sheet under contraction of the containment elastic members and front and rear fixed ends secured to both ends in the longitudinal direction of the interior sheet so that the front and rear ends and the liquid absorbent core are not overlapped each other in a planar view.
- (5) The absorbent article further including the fastener serving to fasten the ventral region and the dorsal region to each other wherein the fastener is disposed with the pair of fastening tabs extending outward in the transverse direction from both lateral portions of the ventral region; the fastening tabs respectively have distal portions secured to the interior sheet or the exterior sheet; and the first end of the liquid absorbent core partially extends outward in the longitudinal direction beyond end edges of the proximal portions lying on the side of the dorsal region.
- (6) The respective ends of the containment elastic members overlap the ventral side elastic member in a planar view.
- (7) The absorbent article further including the lateral elastic members extending in the longitudinal direction from the ventral region to the dorsal region and contractibly attached under tension between the containment sheets and the exterior sheet wherein ends of the lateral elastic members in the ventral region overlap the ventral side elastic member in a planar view.

REFERENCE SIGNS LIST

- 10** absorbent article for pet animal (diaper)
- 11** ventral region
- 12** dorsal region
- 13** intermediate region
- 15** topsheet (interior sheet)
- 16** backsheet (exterior sheet)
- 19** absorbent panel
- 20** fastener
- 22** slit for formation of opening
- 24** first end
- 25** second end
- 29** lateral elastic members
- 34** absorbent core
- 35** liquid-diffusive sheet
- 43** containment sheet
- 44** containment sheet
- 45** proximal portions
- 46** front end portion
- 47** rear end portion
- 48** distal portions
- 49** containment elastic members
- 52** first fastening element
- 53** second fastening elements
- 55** fastening tabs
- 62** ventral side elastic member
- L1** dimension in transverse direction of absorbent core's first end
- L2** dimension in transverse direction of absorbent core's second end

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L3 dimension in longitudinal direction of absorbent core's narrower region

L4 dimension in longitudinal direction of absorbent core X transverse direction

Y longitudinal direction

The invention claimed is:

1. An absorbent article for pet animal, said absorbent article comprising:

a longitudinal direction,

a transverse direction being orthogonal to the longitudinal direction,

a thickness direction being orthogonal to the longitudinal and transverse directions,

a body-contact surface configured to face a pet animal's body,

a non-body-contact surface opposite to the body-contact surface,

an absorbent panel having a ventral region, a dorsal region and an intermediate region defined between the ventral region and the dorsal region in the longitudinal direction, and

a ventral side elastic member extending in the transverse direction in the ventral region, wherein

the absorbent panel includes

a liquid-permeable interior sheet,

a liquid-impermeable exterior sheet and

a liquid absorbent core lying between the interior and exterior sheets,

the liquid absorbent core is arranged in a limited area extending from a zone of the intermediate region into the ventral region, said zone of the intermediate region being adjacent to a slit defining an opening to receive the pet animal's tail,

the liquid absorbent core is formed of a mixture of wood fluff pulp and absorbent polymer particles,

the liquid absorbent core has

a first end lying in the ventral region, and

a second end lying in the intermediate region and opposing to the first end in the longitudinal direction,

the liquid absorbent core includes a narrow region having the first end and a wide region having the second end,

the narrow region of the liquid absorbent core has a portion overlapping the ventral side elastic member in the thickness direction, and gradually narrows from the first end toward the second end,

a dimension of the first end in the transverse direction is less than a dimension of the second end in the transverse direction,

the ventral side elastic member is contractibly attached under tension between the liquid absorbent core and the exterior sheet in the thickness direction, and

the ventral side elastic member overlaps the first end of the liquid absorbent core in the thickness direction.

2. The absorbent article according to claim 1, wherein a dimension of the narrow region in the longitudinal direction

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is in a range of 30 to 90% of a dimension of the liquid absorbent core in the longitudinal direction.

3. The absorbent article according to claim 1, further comprising:

a pair of containment sheets extending in the longitudinal direction on the interior sheet and configured to face the pet animal's body,

wherein the pair of containment sheets have proximal portions secured to the interior sheet or the exterior sheet,

distal portions disposed with containment elastic members extending in the longitudinal direction and adapted to be spaced apart from the interior sheet under contraction of the containment elastic members, and

front and rear ends secured to both ends of the interior sheet in the longitudinal direction, wherein the front and rear ends do not overlap the liquid absorbent core in a planar view.

4. The absorbent article according to claim 3, further comprising:

a fastener configured to fasten the ventral region and the dorsal region to each other, wherein

the fastener comprises a pair of fastening tabs extending outward in the transverse direction from both lateral portions of the ventral region,

the fastening tabs respectively have

distal portions fixed to the interior sheet or the exterior sheet, and

proximal portions opposing the distal portions in the transverse direction,

the first end of the liquid absorbent core partially extends outward in the longitudinal direction beyond end edges of the proximal portions of the fastening tabs in the dorsal region.

5. The absorbent article according to claim 3, wherein respective ends of the containment elastic members overlap the ventral side elastic member in the planar view.

6. The absorbent article according to claim 3, further comprising:

lateral elastic members extending in the longitudinal direction from the ventral region to the dorsal region and contractibly attached under tension between the containment sheets and the exterior sheet,

wherein ends of the lateral elastic members in the ventral region overlap the ventral side elastic member in the planar view.

7. The absorbent article according to claim 1, wherein the first end of the liquid absorbent core is a most distal portion on one side of the liquid absorbent core in the longitudinal direction, and

the second end of the liquid absorbent core is a most distal portion on the other side of the liquid absorbent core in the longitudinal direction.

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